

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 12719 291247Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 12719

DEPARTMENT FOR S/NM, ARA AND AID/SER/INC; HEW FOR NIDA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR CO
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS: QUARTERLY REPORT, OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1976

REF: BOGOTA 10170

SUMMARY: GOC MINHEALTH OFFICIALS REPORT MAJOR REDUCTIONS IN THE SALE OF LICIT CONTROLLED DRUGS. DEA INTELLIGENCE INDICATES THAT SOME MAJOR TRAFFICKING GROUPS ARE MOVING THEIR OPERATIONS AWAY FROM MAJOR URBAN AREAS. COLOMBIAN MARIJUANA PRODUCTION IS UP FOLLOWING THE END OF SEVERE DROUGHT CONDITIONS. OPERATIONAL FUNNEL ENDED AS SCHEDULED ON DECEMBER 1. A ROUTINE CABINET RESHUFFLE TRIGGERED PERSONNEL CHANGES IN A NUMBER OF KEY GOC POSTS CONCERNED WITH NARCOTICS CONTROL. THE NARCOTICS INTELLIGENCE UNIT OF THE NATIONAL POLICE OPENED OPERATIONS IN NOVEMBER. AND, THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS SERVING TIME ON COLOMBIAN JAILS FOR DRUG OFFENSES WAS REDUCED TO 65, A TWO-YEAR LOW. END SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 12719 291247Z

1. ABUSE. ACCORDING TO THE GOC HEALTH MINISTRY, SALES OF BARBITUATES, AMPHETAMINES AND TRANQUILIZERS HAVE DROPPED-OFF BY SOME 40 PERCENT IN THE WAKE OF STRICT CONTROLS ENFORCED UNDER JUNE 1976 ADMINISTRATIVE RULINGS. AT PRESENT, MINHEALTH OFFICIALS ARE CONCENTRATING INSPECTION AND CONTROL EFFORTS ON THE IMPORTATION OF RAW MATERIALS AND THE MANUFACTURE OF FINISHED DRUG

PRODUCTS BY LOCAL PHARMACEUTICAL FIRMS, WITH A VIEW TOWARD REDUCING THE AMOUNTS AND TYPES OF CONTROLLED LICIT DRUGS AVAILABLE ON THE LOCAL MARKET. IN A FURTHER MEASURE AIMED AT CONTROLLING RETAIL SALES, THE MINISTRY IS RECRUITING ADDITIONAL QUALIFIED INSPECTORS WHO WILL FOCUS THEIR EFFORTS ON RETAIL SALES OF LICIT CONTROLLED DRUGS. A FULLER REPORT ON GOC EFFORTS TO REDUCE AVAILABILITY OF LICIT CONTROLLED DRUGS IS BEING PREPARED BY DR. JAMES COOPER OF NIDA, WHO RECENTLY VISITED BOGOTA FOR CONSULTATION WITH GOC MINHEALTH OFFICIALS AND OTHERS CONCERNED WITH ABUSE REDUCTION.

2. PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING: INTELLIGENCE DEVELOPED BA DEA-BOGOTA INDICATES THAT SEVERAL LARGE COLOMBIAN TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS ARE DISPERSING THEIR CLANDESTINE COCAINE LABS IN ORDER TO AVOID STEPPED-UP LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY CONCENTRATED AROUND MAJOR URBAN CENTERS SUCH AS MEDELLIN AND BOGOTA.

3. TRAFFICKING TRENDS. RECENT MAJOR SEIZURES IN THE U.S. CONFIRM THAT TRAFFICKERS HAVE RESUMED SHIPPING MULTI-TON LOTS OF MARIJUANA FROM PRODUCTION AREAS IN THE SIERRA NEVADA REGION OF NORTHER COLOMBIA. . SHIPMENTS WERE CURTAILED THIS FALL (BOGOTA 10170) AS DROUGHT CONDITIONS DRASTICALLY REDUCED MARIJUANA PRODUCTION THROUGHOUT THE NORTH.

4. ENFORCEMENT: OPERATION FUNNEL, A MAJOR TRI-COUNTRY EFFORT UNDERWAY SINCE EARLY SEPTEMBER, CAME TO AN END IN COLOMBIA AS SCHEDULED ON DECEMBER 1. IN COLOMBIA, THE OPERATION RESULTED IN 22 ARRESTS, THE SEIZURE OF NINE KILOGRAMS OF COCAINE, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF SEVERAL COCA BUSH CONCENTRATIONS. INTELLIGENCE DEVELOPED DURING FUNNEL INDICATES THAT THE MAJOR LOADS OF

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BOGOTA 12719 291247Z

PERUVIAN COCA PASTE ENTER COLOMBIA IN SMALL RIVER BOATS OR BY PRIVATE AIRCRAFT. COCA PASTE ORIGINATING IN ECUADOR AND DESTINED FOR COLOMBIAN LABORATORIES MOVES ACROSS THE FRONTIER VIA COMMERCIAL VEHICLES SUCH AS TRUCKS, TANKERS OR BUSES, OR BY SEA ON COASTAL VESSELS CALLING AT TUMACO OR BUENAVENTURA. FOR A FULLER REPORT ON OPERATION FUNNEL SEE BOGOTA 12099.

5. TREATMENT, EDUCATION, REHABILITATION. THREE COLOMBIAN DRUG ABUSE REDUCTION SPECIALISTS ATTENDED THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON NARCOTICS DEMAND REDUCTION, HELD IN CARACAS IN MID-DECEMBER (BOGOTA 11464 AND CARACAS 10678).

6. TRAINING. NO NEW DEVELOPMENTS SINCE LAST QUARTELY REPORT.

7. MISSION AND HOST GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES.

A. AS PART OF A LARGER ROUTINE CABINET RESHUFFLE BEGINNING IN LATE OCTOBER, A NUMBER OF KEY GOC OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT HAVE RESIGNED. MINISTER OF JUSTICE SAMUEL

HOYOS ARANGO QUIT IN MID-OCTOBER AND WAS BRIEFLY REPLACED BY SENATOR VICTOR BARCO GOMEZ. BARCO, IN TURN, RESIGNED AFTER ABOUT ONLY THREE WEEKS IN OFFICE WHEN HE CAME UNDER FIRE IN THE NATIONAL CONGRESS FOR ALLEGED UNETHICAL CONDUCT IN PRIVATE LEGAL PRACTICE. HE WAS SUCCEEDED BY DR. CESAR GOMEZ ESTRADA, A FORMER GOVERNOR AND SUPREME COURT JUSTICE, WHO TOOK OFFICE IN EARLY DECEMBER. NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SECRETARY GERMAN TELLEZ GOMEZ--AN APPOINTEE OF FORMER JUSTICE MINISTER HOYOS--ALSO RESIGNED, AND HAS NOT YET BEEN REPLACED. IN AN UNRELATED MOVE, ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL MIGUEL SANCHEZ MENDEZ HAS BEEN REPLACED BY DR. RUDOLFO GARCIA ORDONEZ, AN EXPERIENCED PROSECUTOR WHO WILL TAKE OVER REPOSIBILITIES FOR OVERSEEING OPERATION OF COMBINED JUDICIAL POLICE NARCOTICS UNITS STATIONED AT COLOMBIAN PORTS AND AIRPORTS.

B. THE NATIONAL POLICE (F-2) NARCOTICE INTELLIGENCE UNIT (NIU) BEGAN OPERATIONS IN NOVEMBER AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS OF SETTING-UP EXERCISES. SEPARATE REPORT FOLLOWS.

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PAGE 04 BOGOTA 12719 291247Z

8. ARREST OF AMERICAN CITIZENS FOR DRUG OFFENSES IN COLOMBIA HAVE AT LEAST TEMPORARILY DECLINED AND THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS SERVING TIME OR AWAITING TRIAL ON NARCOTICS CHARGES HAS BEEN REDUCED OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS FROM 85 TO A CURRENT 65 PERSONS. THE REDUCTION IN THE U.S.PRISONER POPULATION RESULTS FROM THE RELEASE OF SEVERAL PRISONERS ARRESTED IN 1974 WHO HAVE COMPLETED MINIMUM THREE-YEAR SENTENCES WITH APPROPRIATE TIME OFF FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR. FOUR OTHER AMERICAN CITIZENS SERVING TIME FOR DRUG OFFENSES MANAGED TO ESCAPE FROM JAILS IN CALI. SANCHEZ

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